



Every dog is different -- pay close attention to how your dog is responding to this effort. Respond accordingly.

Don't be alarmed at the recommendation of crate training. Just Do it. It doesn't have to be forever. But it does need to be done.

It's overall a very healthy and safe option for your dog. Generally speaking, dogs will enjoy a place of their own that is cozy and den-like. You will be happier and less stressed if your dog is not getting into unsupervised mischief and is relaxed when you're out of the house.

Why should you crate train?

- For puppies, it's the safest place they can be when you can't supervise. Prevent exploration in your house, chewing and other curious behaviors that can actually be dangerous.
- House training It is essential to prevent accidents if you can't keep eyes on the dog while you're home. And helps them develop better control while you're away from home.
- As a quiet place to retreat for rest of his very own.
- This will be great spot when they are tired of the kids or visitors or workers are in your home, etc.
- Transitions to a new home (adoption, foster). It gives them a space of their own to figure out who you are, that they are safe, and get the lay of the land in this new environment.
- Pack Introductions (again new foster, new adoption). Having them behind a safety barrier to observe your dogs, take in scent recognition, etc is critical to preventing incidents.
- As your dog matures, there will come a time that he may need to be boarded or kept at your vets for hospitalization. Being comfortable in a crate is one less stress to add when these things occur.

The most common mistake I think people make in crate training is shoving the dog in and walking out the door; hoping that the dog will acclimate on his own. Some dogs will do just fine and require almost no training. But most will benefit from learning to be in their crate while you are at home and by making it a very positive experience.

It can take several days or even weeks to work through the process. It's generally easier for puppies than adults. And it makes take longer if your dog is experiencing separation anxiety. The goal is to be consistent and take your time with each step of the process. **Don't Rush It! You must go at your dog's pace -- not yours if you are struggling with separation anxiety.**

You may find that beginning this process is best over a weekend so that you can make arrangements not to leave your dog home alone in the crate for an extended period of time. Transitions are hard for puppies and rescue dogs in general. But to then be left alone is a strange place is added stress.



Practice these exercises at meal time and with treats several times each day until you see that your dog is relaxed and calm in their crate.

- Be sure your dog has been out potty and will not need to go for the time you have them crated.
- Assuming they do not chew bedding, make sure they have a comfy bed to snuggle up in. You may also want to include a blanket or article clothing item that smells like you!
- Feed your dog in their crate
- Each time your dog crosses the threshold of the crate -- give a command like "Crate" or "Kennel". This becomes a familiar command of needing to enter the crate.
- Make sure exits from the crate are calm!! Get the dog to sit and calm down before you open the crate. Work on having him wait for a command to be released (Okay). You can even create this with energy.

For Dogs fearful of the Crate:

- If your adult dog won't even go in the crate, start with the food just outside the entry. Over the course of the next several days, begin to inch the food inside the crate at each feeding, until the dog has to go all the way in to eat. Don't be alarmed if they skip a meal or two until they work through this. Your dog will not go hungry - he will figure out how to get the food. It will be harder on you than him -- so don't give in.
- Once your dog is willing to go in the crate, give them a special tasty treat inside the crate. You can tie a favorite chew toy to the back of the crate stuffed with peanut butter, frozen yogurt, etc. Make it so the dog has to stay in the crate to enjoy the treat, even though the door remains open.
- You can even create a great desire to get into the crate by putting something really yummy -- think high value food or a toy or bone locked on the inside. Let your dog really get intrigued by the item and then open the door to let him IN!
- After your dog has learned to enjoy the tasty treat or his meal a few times with the door open, begin interval training with closing the door.
- Close the door for a brief moment while they are inside, and then reopen almost immediately. Praise your dog lavishly.
- Work your way through short intervals to long intervals of leaving the door closed and then praising your dog when they come out.
- Be careful not to excite your dog before they come out. The door should open with them in a calm state. If they are getting too amped up, you're most likely increasing the intervals too fast. Go back to a shorter interval.
- During this phase stay in the room with your dog in the crate. Sit quietly and watch TV, read, or cook dinner for example. Don't interact with your dog. Just be present.
- If your dog is getting stressed, speak to them calmly but confidently and softly to encourage them to settle, offer a treat, request a sit, something that will encourage them to focus on you and calm down. When they have even the briefest moment of focus and calm, open the door. You want them to learn that when they stay calm, they get to come out.



- When you can leave your dog in the crate for 10-15 minutes with them staying in a calm state of mind, then walk out of the room and return almost immediately and let them out. Praising each time they come out.
- Then work your way again through short intervals of staying out of sight, until you can be out for 10-15 minutes.
- When that's doable, walk out of the house. Closing the door behind you, and back in. Again, working your way to being out of the house for 10-15 minutes.
- Keep interval training until your dog reliably demonstrates calm behavior in the crate.

Whiners and Barkers and Crying at Bedtime

- Not allowed!!!
- For puppies and new arrivals to your home the transition period might be difficult. But put them in and close the door. Nite Nite Puppy and move on about your bedtime routine. IGNORE THE PUPPY! If you go let them out, speak to them, or sit with them you are reinforcing the whining -- it worked! It got you to support them.
- With puppies -- it usually takes a day or so and they adjust.
- With adults, if it's severe and doesn't resolve itself in a reasonable time (day or two) and/or if it occurs throughout the day -- you may need to consider taking an approach that is a bit more corrective in nature. This might include a bark collar or other non-verbal / non-human disruption of the barking.

For some dogs, this whole process may take quite a while. Some dogs with very high anxiety may take longer and additional techniques in the process.. And while the process continues you'll still want to practice quite time in the crate while you're home in addition to meals and bedtime.

See our [Blog on Separation Anxiety](#)

You may feel like your dog is spending far more time in the crate while you're home that you want. Remember, it's a training process and should be temporary until they can master being in the crate while you're gone, and be out and about when you're home in a few weeks.

For puppies and adults alike, overnight crating be the hardest of all. Don't give in to the whining or you may find that they learn that it works, and will repeat it more often and with more gusto! If you are certain they have a reliable potty schedule and do not need to go out, leave them be until the next scheduled potty break.

For very young puppies, and untrained adults an overnight potty break may be necessary. Download our House Training Guide.

For dogs that have anxiety issues, many people think crate training is just too hard and they attempt to leave the dog out. Big Mistake. Take the time to crate train your dog -- even those with separation anxiety. If you are working with an anxious dog you may find that additional calming methods are needed. (See below). [Blog on Separation Anxiety](#)



There are several natural remedies that may help. We're happy to discuss these with you. You should always discuss with your vet before administering anything that might conflict with medications your dog may be on. But in most cases, these remedies are safe and effective for adult dogs.

- Lavender -- Essentials Oils and Fragrances of lavender offer calming effects. You can put a few drops on their collar, their bedding, etc. Or you can have lavender scents in air fresheners, etc.
- Calming Collars -- with various scents can be purchased that your dog will wear around their neck to help provide calming effects.
- Chamomile Tea -- brew a tea bag in water, and once cooled add to their water bowl.
- Rescue Remedy or Storm Stress -- both have various natural supplements that can create calming effects.
- Music can also be effective. During times when you're home working on your computer, watching TV, reading, or other times your dog may just be relaxing with you, have some calming music playing in the background. The music can become an association with a calm and restful state of mind. This music might include instrumental piano, spa-type music, etc.
- ThunderShirt (R) -- these are great wraps to provide stress relief for your dog. It provides a sense of slight pressure similar to being held in your arms. It's important to take your time to acclimate the dog to these tools as well before just putting it on and expecting it to work. You want your dog calm to begin with and not making the process of putting it on him stressful, or just putting it on and leaving. They will quickly associate the wrap with leaving and potentially make the wrap ineffective and the anxiety worse.

You may also find that a cover over the crate will help calm them as well. If your dog is anxious, they may pull the cover in through the openings. So as with bedding, be sure your dog is not going to do this before leaving them unsupervised.

Your dog needs you to be calm throughout the process and to not lose your cool! This whole process needs to be positive and creating a good experience for your dog. It may be hard and your dog may be stressed at times. **Don't scold your dog during this process. Don't use the crate as punishment or force them through the experience. Don't be afraid or upset by having to go back a step or two.** Without your calm leadership, this process will be harder than it needs to be and take longer than it might otherwise.

Dogs can be notorious for escape attempts and some actually do escape when they are highly stressed. If you're supervising their acclimation to the crate you should be able to prevent this. Purchase a high quality crate that will help secure your pet safely and do not leave collars or other objects that might be harmful to your dog (including bedding) in the crate when you are unavailable to supervise if your dog is demonstrating any anxiety in the crate.



Do NOT zip tie, Lock or otherwise secure the crate closed to prevent escapes that might prevent you from freeing your dog in an emergency. It is far better to do the work to teach the dog to be calm and let his mind do the work, instead of restrictive measures.

If your dog is demonstrating signs of anxiety included panting, drooling, escape attempts, self-injury, etc -- PLEASE consult with a professional trainer for guidance. These issues do not typically get better on their own. Securing the crate to prevent escapes may create even more stress and panic for your dog.

Misdiagnosis of anxiety disorders can make the matters worse. If you have questions or issues or if new behavioral problems begin to surface -- seek professional supervision.

If you are experiencing any issues with aggression or anxiety with your dog, or if you are just overwhelmed and frustrated, or if you want to progress to advanced techniques and skills -- call professional trainer today. We can help you create reliability and consistency in the most effective and efficient way -- even under big distractions!

Call us today! The K9 Coach Dog Training Charlotte NC

The coaching may be more for you, than the dog!